

Porto Rico of Today- And Its Future



Felix Gordón Davila, Governor of Porto Rico



GOVERNMENT BUILDING AND PLAZA, SAN JUAN



PLAZA DE FERNANDO ROCA, PORTO RICO



PLAZA DE SAN JUAN, PORTO RICO

PORTO RICO is thinking and talking about independence these days—as are the Philippines. The appointment by President Harding of a new governor emphasizes the fact that the Porto Ricans were disappointed in not being allowed to elect their own governor. The new governor is E. Monto Rely of Kansas City, Mo., and his advisor Arthur Vager.



The Porto Rican resident commission in the United States is Felix Gordón Davila. In the house the other day he asked and received unanimous consent to print in the Congressional Record an article by Dr. Albert Shaw on Porto Rico which he said contained "very valuable information which may be useful to members of congress." In connection with his request he said, in substance:

"I would to say once more that the movement of independence in the island of Porto Rico has been greatly exaggerated in the United States; that the people who favor this ideal are very good material out of which to build up loyal American citizens; that we all truly appreciate the privileges of being citizens of this nation; and that our loyalty to the national flag, without mental reservations, is the best evidence of our love to the people of Porto Rico. At all events, the issue of independence is really unfortunate, but the common sense and the patriotism of the Porto Ricans induce me to believe that this ideal will disappear from their minds in the not very distant future."

"I endorse everything printed in this article except the views of the writer regarding the governorship. I really believe, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Porto Rico have a right to elect their own governor, and I hope that the congress of the United States will recognize this right at the proper time. (Applause.)"

"At present we have lost our fight. But we are good losers. We cordially congratulate the new governor on his appointment. He will surely have the cooperation of our people in the discharge of his official duties. We wish him a successful administration."

Dr. Shaw's article is too long for reproduction here in full. Following are some of the important points made:

The Porto Ricans, though living under the American flag and loyal to it beyond a question, are now having very elaborate political discussions about their future. These arguments are not closely followed in the United States and are somewhat puzzling, even to public men at Washington who are sympathetic and open-minded and who really desire to understand. The Porto Ricans themselves are aware that people in the United States read more about politics in Ireland and Canada—and at times more about affairs in Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa—than about what is going on in an island which we annexed more than 20 years ago, and whose people are now American citizens just as truly as are the people of Massachusetts and Virginia.

Most readers in the United States are not aware that the Unionist party, which has a very large majority in each of the chambers of the Porto Rico legislature, swept the island in the election last November on a platform which included an "independence" plank. The opposing party, which bears the name Republican, was, apparently, weakened rather than strengthened by a coalition which it formed with the Socialist party for election purposes. The strong and capable men of Porto Rico are to be found in both parties. In so far as the future of the island is concerned, the Republicans are wholly in favor of accepting the connection with the United States as permanent. The leaders of both parties, as also their newspaper organs, are warm in their expressions of friendliness to the people of the United States and to the government at Washington.

The Unionist leaders disavow all thought of securing an independence that should come with any sacrifice of good will on either part. The Porto Rican political spokesmen on both sides are men of remarkable oratorical ability; and in an election campaign where they seek to gain a large popular following they express themselves more passionately in the discussion of a question like that of independence than when conversing quietly about Porto Rico's best interests with members of the cabinet at Washington or with members of congressional committees. "Independence," we are assured by the leaders, is not secession but natural evolution.

As a matter of fact her connection with the United States is too valuable to Porto Rico to be sac-

rificed unless there are reasons of a compelling kind. But it is hard to believe that such reasons exist.

If the government at Washington should hold Porto Rico as a tropical paradise for the benefit of second-rate American office holders, the Porto Ricans would have a genuine grievance. If the finances of the island were administered for the benefit of the government at Washington, or if the commerce of the island were under restrictions that retarded local prosperity, then certainly Porto Rico would have grievances. But, happily, Uncle Sam has made a good record in these respects. Trade between Porto Rico and the United States is as free as trade between New York and New Jersey. The production and commerce of the island have increased enormously under the American regime.

Porto Rico has a local income tax dating from the war period, but the surtaxes are at very low rates as compared with those of our national income tax. As regards public finance, the Porto Ricans are in an extremely fortunate position. The island's outstanding indebtedness is only about \$10,000,000. All of the revenues raised by Porto Rican taxation are applied to the island's own purposes and are subject to the disposal of the legislature. In addition to these local revenues the United States government pays back to Porto Rico for its own use all the sums collected by our customs-house officers at the island's ports on goods from foreign countries. The Porto Ricans are not subject to our national income or other direct taxes, and therefore are exempt from the burdens imposed by our immense war debt. They are protected by the army and navy of the United States, but do not pay any part of the cost of maintaining our defensive establishments.

For one thing, almost the entire population must be rehoused. Families are large, and the typical home is a very small and slight structure thatched with palm leaves, so primitive and so lacking in all that makes for comfort, convenience, health, and family dignity that it must be condemned and superseded as a matter of public policy. The influence of excellent schools in the towns is already having a marked effect upon the improvement of home conditions. In San Juan, the capital, the government itself is building a large suburb of small concrete houses with suitable appointments, and selling these on a long-time plan to workingmen.

It takes courage to aim high and to work toward the realization of the farthest possibilities. Looking to the future, it is easier to entertain the notion of an independent Porto Rico associated politically with other Latin American entities surrounding the Caribbean sea. And this conception might be fully justified if the alternative meant a rough and factious attempt to Anglo-Saxonize Porto Rico or to subject its people to rules, customs, and standards that seem to them both strange and unpleasant. But this is an age in which personal liberty and local distinctiveness seem to be entirely in keeping with large organizations of government, of commerce, and of culture for purposes of common welfare.

Porto Rico need not fear that she will be "neglected Cinderella in the American household." It is probable that she can play her part in the Caribbean regions with more influence and success if she abandons all thought of a future substitution of her local flag for the Stars and Stripes. Porto Rico will inevitably be managed by Porto Ricans for their own welfare. There is not the slightest danger of domination from Washington for the benefit of continental America and to the harm of Porto Rico. The training and development of the Porto Rican people is much more important than the achievement of outward forms of a more complete home rule. Statehood may be expected as the ultimate thing.

In theory, of course, the Porto Ricans should choose their own governor. In practice, however, it would probably be best for Porto Rico, at least for some time to come, that the governor should be named by the President of the United States. Latin-American countries often victimize them-

selves in the undue excitement and factionalism of electoral contests. It is the business of the governor, whether appointed or elected, to apply firmness, wisdom and intelligence to promoting the welfare of the Porto Rican people. It is probably better for the island that the governorship, like the judiciary, should exercise its functions above and beyond the control of local parties.

There has been a good deal of conflict between capital engaged in such industries as those of sugar and tobacco on the one side and labor—organized under socialistic leadership—on the other. It might not be best for the island at the present time to have such economic conflicts carried into the political arena in the election of a governor. There would seem to be quite enough opportunity for a play of popular politics in the election of members of the two branches of the legislature, of the delegates to Washington, and of local and municipal governments.

The United States has recently paid the sum of \$20,000,000 to Denmark for St. Thomas and the other small islets of the Danish group, which we now call the Virgin Islands and which lie near Porto Rico to the eastward. This purchase is a fresh evidence of the importance that is attached at Washington to the position of the United States in the West Indies, at the Panama Isthmus, and in the Caribbean region. If, then, we are permanently to exercise a foremost influence in the defense and the progress of those regions, the most obvious thing to do is to concentrate strongly upon the development of Porto Rico. A great work for health and education must be carried on in the island, and the success of such an undertaking would justify all necessary expenditures of money and of scientific effort.

The foundations are well laid, and the tasks to be achieved are specific and clearly defined. The island is agricultural and is overpopulated. It is capable of an industrial development that would increase the income of the average family and give steady employment to surplus labor. On the other hand, many Porto Ricans might with advantage be colonized in parts of the United States where agricultural labor is needed. They are already American citizens and entitled to preference as against alien Europeans.

From the standpoint of American defense, Porto Rico has the strategic advantages of location that have not at times been sufficiently well understood by the authorities at Washington. In the long run, the tests of efficiency and of economy would be best met by concentrating as far as possible upon harbor improvement and defensive preparations in Porto Rico as bearing upon the protection of the Panama canal and of all our proper interests in the Caribbean regions.

As an evidence of our regard for Porto Rico and esteem for our fellow citizens there, it would be desirable to appoint a certain number of Porto Ricans to positions in the departments at Washington and also to select several Porto Ricans of suitable education and experience for diplomatic and consular positions.

Although our Spanish-speaking neighbors to the southward have had more than four centuries of experience in trying to adapt themselves to the conditions of life in their respective regions, it is well to remember that there are centuries yet to come, and that the future will give ample opportunity to atone for the mistakes of the past. The application of scientific knowledge is the principal agency that we must now rely upon for improvement of individual and of social conditions. The Western Hemisphere must be harmonious in all that makes for the avoidance of war. It can be associated in many ways for intellectual progress and for the wide diffusion of things that make up our modern standards of civilized life. One of the ways in which the people of the United States can best promote the future well-being of our hemisphere as a whole is to contribute toward intensive progress in the beautiful island which recognizes the American flag as its own.

Daddy's Evening Fairy Tale

BY MARY GRAHAM BONNER

THE GREAT CHORUS.

"You have heard many stories of the adventures of the boy and girl," said Daddy, "who went to the House of Secrets. They found the answers to their questions and now their journey is at an end. Of course they will have their own adventures just as everyone has adventures every day."

"But now that we've followed them to the end of the journey we must leave them, for they're going back to try to live up to the secrets they learned."

"Then, too," Daddy continued, "the birds and the animals, the fairies and the butterflies, the frogs and the mice, many other friends we have in the great world of out-of-doors say that they have been somewhat neglected of late."

"But we had to let some of their stories go until we, too, heard the secrets of the House of Secrets, and now that we've heard, we will go back to our old friends, the animals, the birds and the other creatures we've grown to know and find so interesting."

"That's good," said Nancy, "for I like the stories of animals and birds best, but it was nice to hear of the wonderful House of Secrets and how the boy and girl adventures got there and learned the secrets."

"It was fine," said Nick, "and I'm sure our many friends who can read our stories were glad to hear of those most unusual adventures."

"And just one more story about the boy and girl adventures," said Daddy, "before we leave them. For they know their way home all right. We don't need to help them."

"Because they have so many friends whom they want to be with as long as possible."

"The boy and the girl told Master Thoughtfulness and the Courier Cooperation that since they had visited the House of Secrets they no longer wanted to be leaders, but they wanted to be happy like all the people they had met who had taught them secrets."

"Ah, ah, ah," Master Thoughtfulness said, and threw back his head and laughed. "I'm so happy, oh, so very, very happy!"

"For don't you see," Master Thoughtfulness continued, "that you've



"So Happy"

not only learned the secrets our names tried to tell you!

"You've learned cooperation. And cooperation is really, really Real Brotherhood."

"It's not just cooperation (or getting along) with me or the Courier Cooperation, but with everyone and by everyone."

"The boy and the girl looked at each other. An awful thought had just come to them."

Secrets, they had just learned many secrets."

Master Thoughtfulness seemed to read what they were thinking.

"They're secrets we want to share with everyone," he said, "but only those whose sincere and who're real adventurers can learn them."

Then all the inside doors were suddenly lifted above and disappeared just as quickly and mysteriously, and everyone joined in and sang:

"The voices rose higher and higher. Stronger and clearer came the notes of the song:

"Then a great organ from above peeped out notes which sent thrills of pride and joy through the boy and the girl."

"Brotherhood," sang that mighty chorus, "Brotherhood!"

"The boy and the girl joined in the chorus."

"Brotherhood," they sang with the others, "Brotherhood!"

Evidence of Fine Character.

When we see a boy rejoicing over another boy's success, we say: "Good!" For it is one evidence of a fine character, this rejoicing in another fellow's success, this making his interest your interest. A boy whose interests are bounded by his own hat and shoes will be a dead failure in life. Cut out envy as you would cut out a cancer. Frank stands at the head of the class; you may have studied equally hard but Frank is naturally brighter than you. Look him in the face, pat him on the back, and say: "Good for you, Frank!" Why not appreciate every bit of brightness in the other fellow? Nothing like it to stimulate your own gray matter.

AN OPEN LETTER TO WOMEN

Mrs. Little Tells How She Suffered and How Finally Cured

Philadelphia, Pa.—"I was not able to do my housework and had to lie down most of the time and felt bad in my left side. My monthly periods were irregular, sometimes five or seven months apart and when they did appear would last for two weeks and were very painful. I was sick for about a year and a half and doctored but without any improvement."



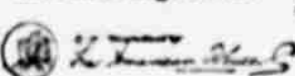
A neighbor recommended Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound to me, and the second day after I started taking it I began to feel better and I kept on taking it for seven months. Now I keep house and perform all my household duties. You can use these facts as you please and I will recommend Vegetable Compound to everyone who suffers as I did. — Mrs. J. B. Little, 303 Livingston St., Philadelphia, Pa.

How much harder the daily tasks of a woman become when she suffers from such distressing symptoms and weakness as did Mrs. Little. No woman should allow herself to get into such a condition because such troubles may be speedily overcome by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, which for more than forty years has been restoring American women to health.

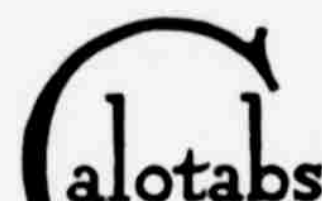


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